

SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRIBAL CHILDREN OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR: ANALYSING TRENDS IN ENROLMENT, GENDER PARITY AND DROPOUT RATE

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ABSTRACT

The paper analysed school progression, enrolment, disparity, and dropout patterns and trends of tribal school going children of Jammu and Kashmir over time. The study applies the time series approach and uses U-DISE data of Ministry of Education, Government of India. The data regarding the above-mentioned indicators published from the year 2012-13 to 2018-19 were analysed. To analyse and visualise the data, descriptive statistics and graphical representation were employed. The study found an increasing trend in school growth over these years. The study found a declining trend in enrolment patterns of tribal children in school education at primary and upper primary stage while as improvement in enrolment trends at secondary and senior secondary stages. Tribal GER rate at initial stages (primary & upper primary) showed increasing trends, while as in terminal stages (secondary & senior secondary) showed a sharp decline. Although, tribal GPI has increased over a period of time but are yet to be achieved, which shows wider gender disparity. The trend in dropout rates of tribal children at primary stages have steeply increased and with each passing stage, it becomes more severe. Moreover, the stage, gender, and district-wise variations and gaps in these parameters have been found among tribal as well as non-tribal children. The results of the study can be helpful in enhancing enrolment, reducing disparity, and dropout rates among tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir. The study will be helpful to policy makers, educators, tribal cum social welfare organisations, researchers, and NGO's to explore the different forces (intrinsic and extrinsic) that haunt the participation, transition, and survival of tribal children in school education.

Keywords: Scheduled Tribe, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Dropout, Gender Parity, School Education.

Introduction

Indigenous People, also called Adivasi, aboriginal, native, autochthonous, or first people, are tribal groups and communities marked by distinctive culture, language, religion, customs, traditions, life style, livelihood and occupational patterns; thus, making them unique from mainstream culture. The history bears witness that the suppression of the “indigenous or adivasi” groups not only in India but across the globe as well. The indigenous people have been and are still living a miserable life, facing absolute exclusion, exploitation, inequality, and discrimination from all sides; their communities are poverty ridden, having elevated illiteracy levels and low socio-economic status making their life miserable and critical. Their socio-economic marginalisation and backwardness severely affect their human development - Health, Education and living standards (United Nations, 2009; Xaxa, 2014).

Residing in, over more than 90 different nations, the global population figure of

indigenous people as per World Bank figures is between 300–500 million. Their share of the total world population is only five (5) percent (World Bank, 19 May, 2021). The dominant majority of indigenous people reside in African and Asian countries. Africa's indigenous population is estimated to be 50 million having more than 3000 tribal groups and India estimated tribal population is 104.3 million, with 705 tribal groups accounting for 8.2 percent of the total Indian population (UN, 2013; Indigenous Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2021; Census, 2011). Erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, now one among the eight (8) Union Territories of India, has a tribal population of 1.49 million, covering 11.9 percent (including Ladakh, now a separate Union Territory, was earlier part of J&K State) of the total population. There is no universal nomenclature of indigenous peoples across the globe, different nations designate them as per their own legislation, using different terminology, nomenclature, and definitions that lag conceptual clarity (Béteille, 1986; Khan,

2016; Wikipedia, May 21, 2021). India designates them as scheduled tribes for administrative and political convenience, thereby making it “Politico-administrative category” (Pathy, 1984; Xaxa, 1999). For the first time in Census 2001, the listing of scheduled tribes was initiated officially. Twelve (12) tribal groups have been notified by Jammu and Kashmir constitution as scheduled tribes so far, out of which eight (8) viz., Boto, Beda, Balti, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Shina/Dard were notified in 1989 and other four (4) viz., Sippi, Bakarwal,

Gaddi and Gujjar were also included in 1991 (Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989; Scheduled Tribes, Amend. Act, 1991). The tribal groups are spread all across Jammu and Kashmir and their population varies not only from division to division but also from district to district. The Ladakh division (used to be the part of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state till 2019) has 79.54 % of the tribal population, followed by Jammu with 15.07 % and Kashmir with 6.74 %. The population of scheduled tribes of Jammu and Kashmir as per Census 2011 is given below in Table 1.

Table 1. Showing Percentage of tribal population of Jammu and Kashmir.

Tribe	Population	Percentage of tribal population	Tribe	Population	Percentage of tribal population
Gujjar	980,654	65.67 %	Purigpa	39,101	2.61 %
Bakerwal	113,198	7.58 %	Sippi	5,966	0.39 %
Bot, Boto	91,495	6.12 %	Changpa	2,661	0.17 %
Balti	51,918	3.47 %	Mon	828	0.05 %
Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin	48,439	3.24 %	Garra	504	0.03 %
Gaddi	46,489	3.11 %	Beda	420	0.02 %

Source: Census, 2011. Note: The population figures of all divisions of the erstwhile J&K state (now Union Territory) including Ladakh (Now a separate Union Territory) are included.

Located in the lap of the great Himalayan region, northern part of Indian continent, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) represents a, “Panorama of plurality” (European Foundation for South Asian Studies, 2020) habituated by a multitude of ethno-linguistic, religious and culturally diverse groups and communities. The tribal development and progress still frustrate the administrators, policy makers, and educators as tribals still in the 21st century are backward and marginalised as far as their education, literacy, parity, health and economy are concerned. The tribal literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir is 50.60 % (Male 60.6 % & Female 39.70 %) which is much below than the national and state average of 74.04 % & 67.2 % respectively, as well as the literacy rate of total tribal population of India 58.96 %. The poor literacy rate of females when compared to their counter parts at national and state level visualises a wider gap. Xaxa (2001) rightly observed that tribals in literacy

as well as educational attainment especially of female folk are significantly low compared with mainstream population. About 10.35 % people fall under poverty line, comparatively higher than the all India average of 6.84 % (NITI Aayog, n. d.). Directorate of Economics and Statistics, J&K in its Economics Survey 2014, revealed that the prevalence of poverty is highest among tribals (42 %) compared to the general population (21.6 %). The rural areas of J&K have the highest 26.14 % and urban areas have 7.96 % living below the poverty line (BPL). Tribal women’s (expecting/lactating) under nutrition and tribal child malnutrition severely affects their health in tribal communities and leads to deformities, diseases, and morbidity (Hameed & Naida, 2017; Debnath & Bhattacharjee, 2014; Manhas 2021). The low participation of tribals in educational endeavours determines a falling demand of education among them. To mainstream tribals in education, the central and state governments from time to

time made policies, programmes, and intervention schemes. A lot has been achieved in terms of educational participation, but the retention and survival of tribals in school education until completion needs to be highly focused.

India has made significant efforts to provide education to all social groups. However, some social groups or communities like ST/SC/OBC could not reap educational benefits and as a result of it, remain deprived, marginalised, and backward. Moreover, the higher incidence of wastage as well as stagnation in school education among such communities is rampant since independence. Even though every section of society has equal access to school education but, when outcomes are taken into account, tribals lag behind in access, quality, equity and achievement parameters. Tribal children experience numerous barriers to reap the fruits of government provisions, policies, programmes, incentive schemes, etc offered by various departments like education, social welfare, tribal welfare, etc which inversely affects their capabilities and hampers their school progress and completion. Education plays a key role in the social, economic, and educational mobility of marginalised tribal communities (Sedwal & Kamat, 2008). Education alone has the potential to mitigate the impediments stemming from numerous forces affecting a child's education (SOS children's village, 2013). Enhancing living and health conditions, removing disparities, poverty, ignorance among marginalised indigenous/tribal communities, education is the only way forward and school education is the first step in this regard. The education will raise the socio-economic conditions and living standards of marginalised tribal communities also. Education has a vibrant role in developing a socially just society (Freire, 1970; Bandhopadhyay, 2006).

The statistical figures of tribals of Jammu and Kashmir in school education show a gloomy picture and depressing numbers. The neglect of school education trends over time by administrators, policy makers, educators, statisticians in school progression, enrolments, dropouts and disparity at different educational stages and the real

essence of schooling and education among tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be overlooked furthermore. The paper strives to reveal such trends and is an eye opener for the concerned authorities, researchers, and NGO's to explore the different forces (intrinsic and extrinsic) that haunt the participation, transition and survival of tribal children in school education. The results of the study can be helpful in enhancing enrolment, reducing disparity and dropout rates among tribal communities of Jammu and Kashmir.

Objectives

- ❖ To visualises the trends in school education with reference to school progression, enrolment ratio's, gender parity, and dropout rates especially among scheduled tribes of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ To make a stage and gender-wise comparison of the above-mentioned accessibility, equality, and equity parameters of scheduled tribes.

Design/Methodology/Approach

The study uses a time series design/approach, where data from various points of time, i.e., from 2012-13 to 2018-19 was taken from U-DISE plus, School Education & Literacy Department, Ministry of Education, Government of India. U-DISE captures school education data annually from all the Indian States and Union Territories. Descriptive statistical analysis, particularly percentage analysis, was used to visualise trends over time, graphical representation particularly trend lines and bar graphs were used for analysis of data.

Findings and Discussion

School Education in Jammu and Kashmir: School, Enrolment Progression and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

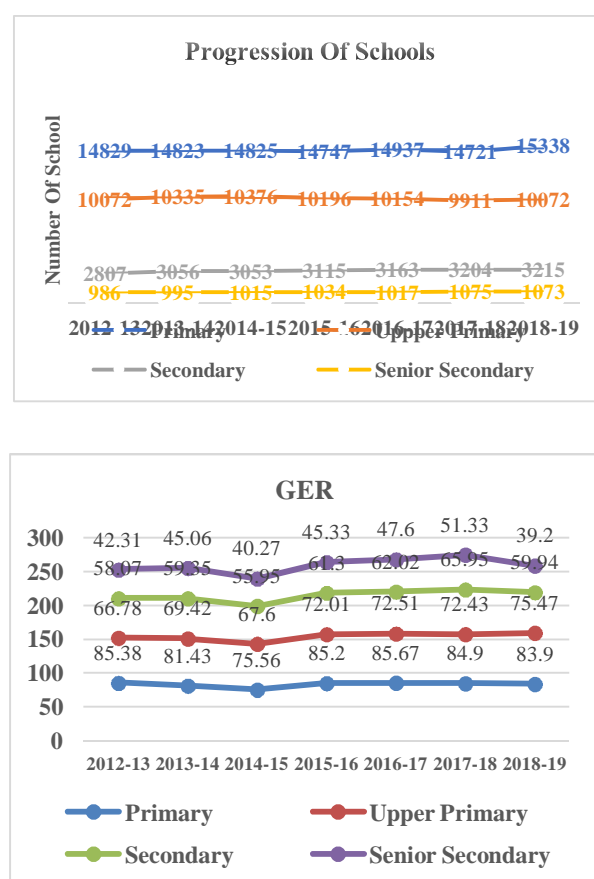
During the past decades, school education system of India has witnessed monumental structural transformation (Manjrekar, 2005) and Jammu and Kashmir is not an exception. The impressive progression of school growth at the national level is praiseworthy (Ramachandra, 2004). Involvement of private enterprises, local community, varied

institutional approaches (modern, secular, religious), mobile, residential and shift schools, etc has further strengthened the bonds of the democratic setup, universal education, and progressive societal transformations. This in turn, has resulted in increased institutional accessibility and social equity. Since, 2013-14 to 2018-19, notable incremental changes have taken place in the quantum of schools in Jammu & Kashmir. In Jammu and Kashmir, primary, upper primary, secondary, and senior secondary schools have increased 3.43, 0.21, 14.53, and 8.81 times, respectively, during 2012-13 to 2018-19. Table 1. Further shows the year-wise number of schools, stating the continuous progression of school growth.

Over the past decade, the dynamism in school management at various school education stages has been observed. In Jammu and Kashmir, school management types include schools managed by Centre/UT government (aided/unaided), Private, and Madrasa managed (un/recognised). In the year 2018-19, a total of 27908 schools are in Jammu and Kashmir, out of which 80.84 % (24018) are managed by govt., 0.09 % (29) are govt. aided, 18.72 % are private managed (5552 recognised & 11 unrecognised), 0.20 % (45 KV's, 17 JNV's) and 0.12 % (34 Wakf recognised & 2 Unrecognised). Looking at stage-wise figures, of all 15348 primary schools for the year 2018-19, 87 % (13502) are managed by govt. 0.16 % (26) govt. aided, 11.65 % (1780 recognised, 9 Unrecognised) are privately managed, below zero percent are managed by central govt. (0.006 %,) and wakf/madrassa (0.19 %,) managed. At upper primary stage, 79.51 %, 20.36 are govt. and privately managed, respectively. Government and privately managed schools at secondary stage account for 57.29 %, and 42.33 %, respectively, and for senior secondary, it is 61.97 % and 33.73 %, respectively. Below 1 percent of schools were managed by central govt. and wakf/madrassa boards after primary stage of education. However, a rise in the share of privately managed schools at secondary as well as senior secondary stage has been observed, to which Kingdon (2007;172) called, "lucrative level of education".

Empirical studies have found that public schools are ill resourced, lack accountability, have high teacher absenteeism, low reputation, low recognition, low achievement of students, economic and educational reforms in the form of privatisation, extension as well as decentralisation of education (Leclercq, 2002; Rani, 2004; Muralidharan & Kremer, 2006; Kingdon, 2008b, Little & Levin, 2011, Kingdon, 2017).

Figure 1 & 2. Progression of Schools and GER in Jammu and Kashmir.



Source: UDISE (2012-13 to 2018-19), Number of school Ministry of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, accessed on May 4, 2021.

Note: Number of schools includes schools run by Deptt. Of Education, Govt. aided, Private unaided, unrecognised, Kendriya Vidhyala's (KV's), Jawahar Navodaya Vidhyalas (JNV's), Madrasas un/recognised by Wakf.

The overall enrolment growth at school education stage (I-XII) from the year 2012-13 to 2018-19 has been found negative in J&K. It has decreased -6.54 % during the said period (2400075 in 2012-13 & 2252700 in

2018-19). Primary school enrolment has decreased -9.21 %, receding from 12.1 million in 2012-13 to 1.10 million in 2018-19; Upper primary enrolment -9.37 % receding from 0.64 million (2012-13) to 0.58 million (2018-19). However, at secondary education stages, the increasing trend of school enrolment has been found. The enrolment growth at the secondary stage has increased 10.72 % from .33 (2012-13) to 0.36 million (2018-19) and 12.02 % i.e., from .21 million (2012-13) to .23 million (2018-19) increase has been recorded in enrolment at senior secondary level during the said period, which is highest as far as other school education stages are concerned.

Taken into account gender, the aggregate girl's enrolment of Jammu and Kashmir at school education (I-XII) has fallen by -4.62 %, i.e., from 1.12 million to 1.07 million from the year 2012-13 to 2018-18 and that of boys, fell by -7.47 % i.e., 1.27 million to 1.18 million during the same period, displaying more decline in case of boys. Analysing gender enrolment at school education stages from the year 2012-13 to 2018-19, the girl's enrolment declined by -8.41 % and boys was -14.61 % at primary stage and dipped -8.17 % in case of girls and -10.43 in boys at upper primary stage. Secondary stage witnessed 2.1 % rise in girl's enrolment and a decline of -2.03 % boy's enrolment. The highest percentage increase of 19.31 % girl's & 6.26 % boy's enrolment was seen in senior secondary stage. There has been a declining trend up to the upper primary stage in both genders. Moreover, the enrolment trends of both genders witnessed a steep rise from secondary to senior secondary stage except boys at secondary stage. Taking into account the percentage share of both genders in school education (I-XII), the girls share still remains below 47 % (47.52 % in 2018-19 & 46.77 % in 2012-13). Similarly, the girls share in total enrolment at the four stages of education from 2012-13 to 2018-19 observed marginal changes and remained below 47 percent in case of girls and above 52 percentage in case of boys. The decline of percentage enrolment of girls at initial stages, a steady increase at later stages, and marginal increase in percentage share of girls in

Jammu and Kashmir at school education during the said has been observed.

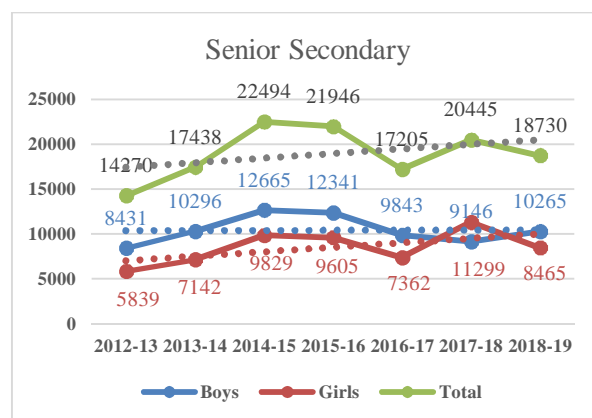
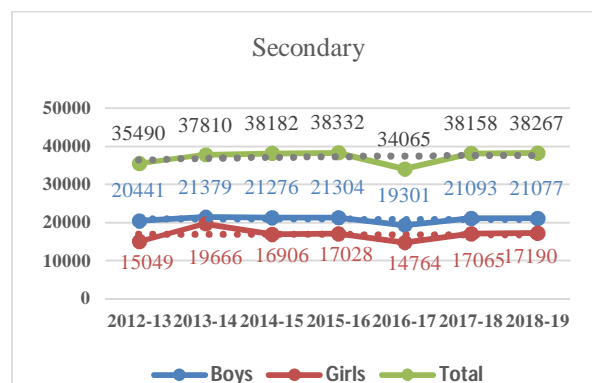
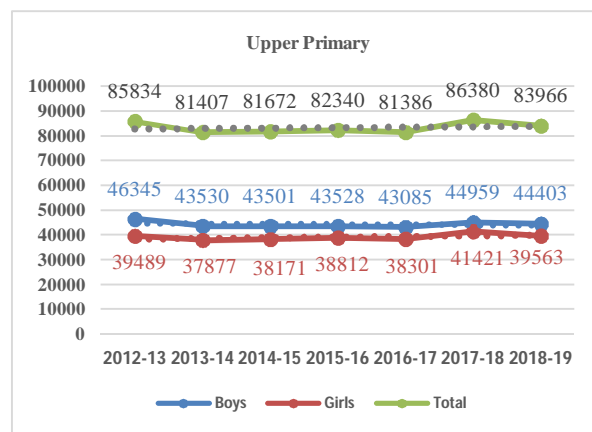
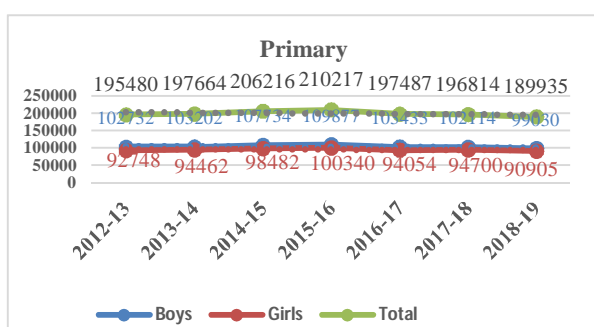
Analysing Gross Enrolment Ratio of Jammu and Kashmir (GER) at various school education stages, the aggregate GER at primary stage for the year 2012-13 and 2018-19 is 83.90 (83.37 Boys & 84.50 Girls) and 85.39 (83.6 Boys & 87.4 Girls) respectively, depicting marginal increase of 1.58 % during the said period. Moreover, the girls GER has increased by 3.43 % at this stage. Moving forward to the upper primary GER ratio's, it fell by -11.51 % (75.47 in 2012-13 to 66.78 in 2018-19) has been observed. Furthermore, the decline has been more in the case of boys (-13.25 %) compared to girls (-9.53 %) during the said period. The declining trend further continues at the secondary stage, the overall GER at this stage fell by -.311 % from the year 2012-13 (59.94) to 2018-19 (58.07). For boys, it has decreased by -5.91 % and for girls, marginally increased by 0.41 %. The senior secondary stage GER rates were promising compared to the previous three stages of school education. The aggregate GER increased by 7.93 %, i.e., from 39.2 in 2012-13 to 42.31 in 2018-19; the girls GER rose from 36.12 to 42.01 showing a surge of 16.30 % and GER of boys remains at 42.04 and 42.43 respectively. The data depicts stage and gender-wise disparity in GER of Jammu and Kashmir. The decline trend has been observed in GER up to secondary stage of school education. Although, it has increased at senior secondary stage of school education but it is below 43 which is very low. The gloomy picture of GER is due to low transition rate and elevated dropout.

Mehta (2019a) also found steep declining patterns of enrolment in recent years at national as well as state level at primary school education stage and predicted its effect on subsequent stages. Jammu & Kashmir (10.34 %) figures among states with higher declining percentage along with along with Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Sikkim, and Lakshadweep with 16.24 %, 11.52 %, 10.58 % & 5.13 % decline. Mehta cited, "low efficiency of the primary education system", "low retention", "low transition" and "high dropout" are mainly responsible for such declining trend.

Scheduled Tribe Children of Jammu and Kashmir: Enrolment Progression and Gross Enrolment Ration (GER)

Empirical studies and reports have clearly indicated the surge in enrolment of scheduled tribe children at school education stage since independence at national level. However, over the past few years, a steep decline in enrolment patterns of all as well as scheduled tribe children has been observed while analysing U-DISE data (Mehta, 2019b). In this regard, Jammu and Kashmir is not an exception, from the years 2012-13 to 2018-19, the aggregate tribal enrolment at primary stage also decreased by -2.83 % of which boys and girls decreased by -3.60 % and -1.98 %, respectively. At the upper primary stage, it fell by -2.29 % (aggregate), of which boys and girls also fell by -4.19 % and -2.29 %. The increase in tribal enrolment at the last two stages has been impressive. The secondary stage tribal enrolment improved by 7.82 % (boys 3.1 % & girls 14.22 %). Similarly, their enrolment at the terminal stage of school education also improved significantly by 31.25 % (boys 21.75 % & girls 44.49 %). In the last two stages of school education, the tribal girl's enrolment figures have shown a steep upswing in comparison to boys. The policy of establishing Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya's (KGBV's), Residential, Ashram, Madrassa, and Eklavya Model schools for educationally backward children of various marginalised communities like scheduled tribes, castes and other backward classes (OBC) has proved to be fruitful in enhancing enrolment (Centre for Budget & Policy Studies, 2015)

Figure 3, 4, 5, 6. Showing enrolment trend of Tribal Children of J&K at school education stages.



Source: UDISE plus (2012-13 to 2018-19)
accessed on 22-25 April 2021

Analysing GER of scheduled tribe children of Jammu and Kashmir from the year 2013-14 to 2018-19, the continuous improvement has been observed at all school education stages. At the primary stage, the aggregate GER of tribal children in 2013-14 and 2018-19 has been 92.35 & 94.3, showing an increase of 2.11 % and at the upper primary stage, increased by 4.14 % (52.35 in 2013-14 & 70.1 in 2018-19). In the terminal stages of school education, it shows a steep decline as secondary GER of tribal children fell by -8.34 % while as senior secondary GER fell by -6.98 % during the said period. There has been a continuous improvement in tribal enrolment

and GER figures when compared to overall enrolment and GER figures during the said period. Project Approval Board, MoE and Secretary School Education, J&K in a meeting reported, “the total enrolment decline across classes is nearly 1.75 lakh in 2019-20” and the reasons cited are poor basic school facilities, poor retention, elevated dropout rates at all stages, low achievement score (Majid, Sept. 18 2020).

Gender Parity Index (GPI) among school going Scheduled Tribe Children of Jammu and Kashmir

The GPI of tribal children of J&K at primary stage from the year 2013-14 to 2015-16 has remained stagnant at 0.98, which is low compared to all categories of children (1.02, 1.05 and 1.06). At the upper primary stage, it is 0.98, 1.00 & 1.02 for the years 2013-14, 2014-15 & 2015-16, respectively, but still figure below (1.02, 1.01 & 1.02) for all categories of children except for the year 2015-16 where GPI of both tribal and all categories of children are same. The GPI data of tribal children of J&K at secondary and senior secondary stage shows improvement over five year time period, of 2013-14 to 2017-18. GPI at secondary stage improved and were 0.88 (2013-14), 0.91 (2014-15), 0.92 (2015-16), 0.88 (2016-17) & 0.99 (2017-18). However, they are very low compared to 0.94 (2013-14), 0.96 (2014-15), 0.97 (2015-16), 0.96 (2016-17) & 0.99 (2017-18) for all categories of children except, for the year 2017-18. At senior secondary stage, the tribal GPI in 2013-14 is 0.80 and in 2017-18 it is 0.9. For all categories of children, the GPI for the same period also were 0.88 (2013-14) to 0.98 (2017-18). At all the four school education stages, the GPI of tribal children is significantly below all other categories of children. However, significant improvements in GPI have been observed over the past few years. The GPI of tribal and non-tribal children at terminal stages are low compared to the initial stages of school education. It can be said that over the past few years, the constant dip in the gender gap of tribal boys and girls at school education stages is a clear indication of the progression towards achieving the much-cherished goal of gender

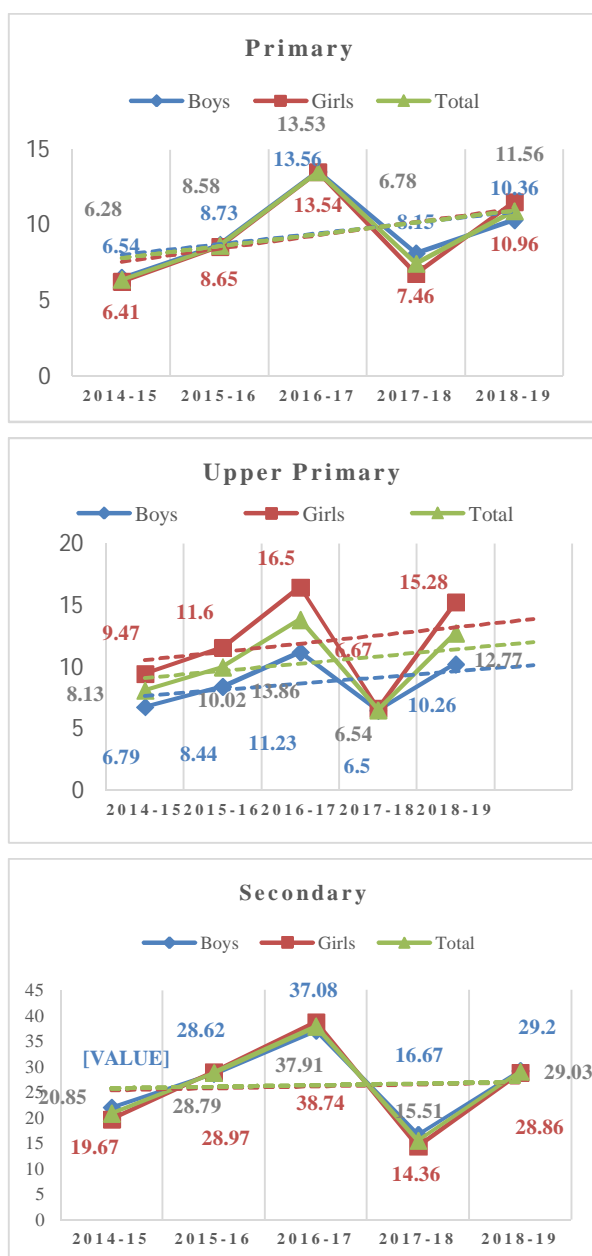
equity. Arun & Kumar (n. d.) in their study also observed the qualitative progress in GPI at national level.

At primary and upper primary stage, gender parity is above 01, indicating higher girl enrolment compared to boys, hence, GPI for all categories of children in Jammu and Kashmir is achieved. In the case of tribal children, GPI is yet to be achieved at primary, secondary, and senior secondary stage, however, at the upper primary level it has been achieved. Provision of educational access to female children alone does not eliminate gender disparities. Empirical studies have clearly stated that the attendance patterns and retention rates of enrolled girls in school education are low compared to their counterparts. As intra-household prejudice regarding their enrolment in school and expenditure of education (Kingdon, 2005); school location, TP ratio, socio-cultural environment, single teacher schools (Ramachandran & Chatterjee, 2014); early marriage, poverty (Tribal Research & Cultural Foundation, n.d.; “Polygamy Still Prevalent,” 2015); sibling care (Bhasin, 2007); unsatisfactory meal patterns and health issues (Badyal, 2002); domestic affairs (Dabla, 2007); shortage of female toilet & classroom (Kumar & Gour, 2017); religious cum cultural belief and dogmas (Rather, July 6, 2020); household income (Quayes & Ramsey, 2015); war & conflict (Ravinder, 2005); preference of sons (Kholi & Jasrotia, 2014) restrict access and survival of girls in education thereby, causing gender disparity.

Dropout Rates Among Scheduled Tribe Children of Jammu and Kashmir

Dropout or exit from school is a matter of grave concern in school education and need to be looked thoroughly and curbed at the earliest. The problems of dropout persist more among scheduled tribe children along with other types of disadvantaged children. The dropout rate of scheduled tribe children of Jammu and Kashmir at school education level are much higher compared to national average. It is ironic that even after 7 decades of Indian independence, the incidence of high dropouts is shocking.

Figure 7, 8, 9. Showing the trend in dropout rates of scheduled tribe children of J&K



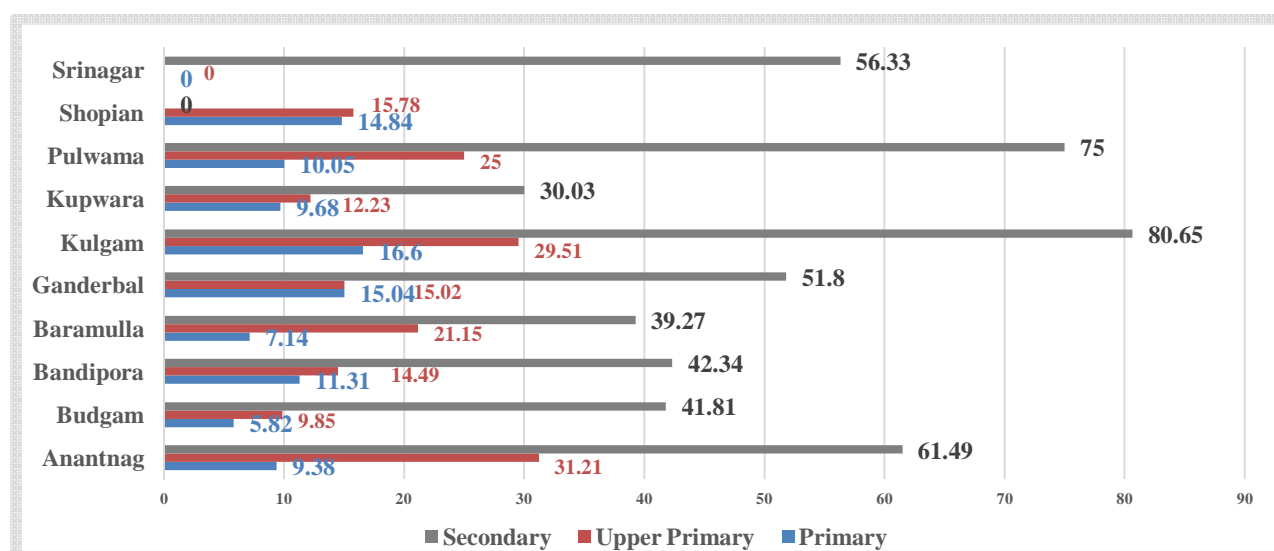
Source: UDISE plus accessed on 30-04-2021.

Figure 7, 8 & 9 clearly shows an increasing trend in dropout rates of tribal children at primary, upper primary, and secondary

educational stages. The dropout rates of tribal children of Jammu and Kashmir at primary stage have steeply increased from 6.41 % (Boys 6.54 % & Girls 6.28 %) in 2014-15 to 10.96 (Boys 10.36 % & Girls 11.56 %) in 2018-19. The upper primary stage dropout rates were even higher than the earlier stage, the rates increased from 8.13 % (Boys 6.79 % & Girls 9.47 %) in 2014-15 to 12.77 (Boys 10.26 % & girls 15.28 %) in 2018-19. At the secondary stage, dropout rates were the highest and were increasing at a very fast rate, from 20.85 % (boys 22.03 % & girls 19.67 %) to 29.03 % (boys 29.20 % & girls 28.86 %) in 2018-19. The dropout rate of girls at the initial two stages of girls is more over these years compared to their counter parts. However, the boy's dropout was more at the secondary stage than girls. The dropout rate increases with each passing stage of school education. The tribal dropout rates over these years (from 2014-15 to 2018-19) are very much above compared to the overall categories of children.

Analysing district-wise dropout rates of tribal children in Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir (see figure 10.), the district with the highest ST dropout rate 16.6 % for the year 2018-19 at primary stage is Kulgam, followed by Ganderbal with 15.04 %. At the upper primary stage, the districts figuring at high among ST dropout rates are Anantnag and Kulgam with the rate of 31.21 % and 29.51 %, respectively. The district with the lowest tribal dropout rate at the initial two stages of school education is Srinagar. The district Kulgam figures at the top with 80.65 % tribal dropout rate at the secondary stage, followed by Pulwama with 75.00 % and the district Kupwara has the lowest tribal dropout rate of 30.03 % at the same stage.

Figure 10. Showing District wise dropout rates of scheduled tribes of Kashmir division.



Note: UDISE plus (2018-19) accessed on 30-.4-2021.

Note: The dropout rates of ST's of Shopian District at secondary stage were not available.

Variation in the magnitude of dropout rates have been found when location, gender, and social categories were taken into consideration (Joshi, 2010). To find the reasons of dropout, galore of empirical studies have found poor attendance, academic performance, gender discrimination, sibling care, lack of interest in studies (Bashir Khan & Vaida, 2014); early marriage & cost of education (Farooq, 2013); disability, orphanhood, child labour (Ngwakwe, 2014); parental reluctance & domesticated labour (Kotwal, Kotwal & Rani, 2007); lack of work experience (Khan, 1987), economic status, occupation of parents, teachers qualification (Govindaraju & Venkateshan, 2010); educational costs, uninterest in studies, absenteeism (Tas et al., 2013); nomadism, seasonal migration, cattle rearing (Sharma, 2009; Tufail, 2014; The Inter-Agency Regional Analysts Network, 2016); need achievement (Khan, 1994); domestic work, push (school related)/pull (student related) or fallout (circumstantial) factors (Doll, Eslami & Walters, 2013); child marriage, poor achievement, Physical disorders cum mental retardation (Kishore & Shaji, 2012); social intelligence (Lone & Khan, 2018); drugs, alcohol abuse, absence of parental monitoring (Fernández-Suárez, 2016); mental health (Khan & Lone, 2017); Poor accommodation, parental illiteracy, irregular teaching by

teachers, Parental reluctance (Koka, 2019); large size of family, remote accessibility, absence of guidance, non-affordability (Maningba, Jeyaseelan & Stephen, 2020); adverse cultural norms, belief and practice (Colclough, Rose & tembon); corporal punishment, distance from school (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009); cultural norms, rituals customs and material culture (sabara, 2010); absence of curriculum in mother tongue (Bhat & Khan, 2020); sibling care (Chaudhari & Roy, 2005); adjustment (Bhat, 2020); are mainly responsible for dropout. These factors determine to a great extent the enrolment, retention and high dropout drop-out rates of tribal children in school education.

Conclusion & Suggestions

The tribals of J&K are the incredibly disadvantaged and marginalised communities across the state as far as their education, SES, and health are concerned. On human development indicators (HDI), their position is appalling and very much below compared to other communities of the state, which has devastating effects on their education in general and minimal school participation, transition, survival and significant school dropout in particular. Stage and gender-wise variation have been observed among tribal enrolment, GER, GPI & dropout rates during the said period. Increasing school

accessibility within 1 km distance has significantly contributed towards impressive tribal enrolment, which is reflected by rising enrolment trends at initial two stages. However, the terminal two stages have shown a declining trend from 2012-13 to 2018-19. During the same period, tribal GER at primary & upper primary stages declined due to clubbing or merging of more than 2406 schools since 2015, which is against National Policy on Education-1986 and SSA norms ("2406 Schools Merged," 2016, June 02); "The Curious Case of Abandoned School," (2018, July 09) while as, at later two stages, have shown upward trend. The tribal gender parity index at primary stage remains unchanged, however, the next stage, it is more than one, and at the last two stages, the gender parity gap widens further. Tribal children of J&K fail to complete the full cycle of school education as they dropout school due to the factors mentioned above. The tribal dropout rates have shown an upward trend during the said period. The dropout rates widen further in the terminal stages of school education and girls have been at the receiving end as they have to leave the school for one reason or the other. The stage-wise dropout rates of ten districts of Kashmir division show alarming and disparate dropout rates which are very much higher than national average and tribal dropout rates at national level. The secondary stage dropout rates are extremely higher in all districts compared to earlier stages of school education.

Various government initiatives and intervention schemes from time to time have significantly increased the access to schooling to the children of scheduled tribes. Certain internal and external factors, poverty, illiteracy of parents, low SES, seasonal migration, hereditary occupation, cultural inertia, cattle rearing, socio-cultural norms and beliefs, child marriage, domestic and agricultural labour, cost (direct & indirect) of education, alien curriculum and language, act as barriers in their retention in schools and these barriers not only vary from one tribal community to other but also from region to region. Hence, there is a need for community and region-specific policies and intervention programmes, exclusively meant for their

welfare. The retaining capacity of the school education system is challenged on account of their language policy, curriculum contents, teacher, and their training. The prevalent school education system of Jammu and Kashmir mainly meets the needs of dominant communities and school education curriculum and pedagogy appear alien to tribal communities. The study suggests that an improvement in the quantum of school and adequate infrastructure facilities of playground, drinking water, electricity, washrooms, libraries, and mid-day meals.

The tribals of J&K, particularly Gujjar & Bakarwal tribes, face educational, social, and economic exclusion. Although educational policies support "mother tongue" as a medium of instruction (MOI) at the primary stage, tribal languages like Gojri is/are being excluded from the educational system as well as J&K Official languages Bill 2020, even though, Gojri is the 3rd most spoken language after Kashmiri and Dogri (Census, 1971). Equitable measures in designing curriculum and pedagogy must be taken, ensuring the inclusion of tribal languages and local contents in the school and varsity curricula. Rahi (March 7, 2009) tribal researcher, activist, writer, demanded Gojri as a separate subject and inclusion of Gojri textbooks in schools. Gojri have been recognised by Ministry of Education, India; Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), Jammu & Kashmir; Centre Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and Sahitya Akademi, as "independent literary language" ("Include Gojri," 2020, Oct. 05). There is an urgent need to start PG department of Gojri in Universities of Jammu and Kashmir for its progress and development. There is a need to employ more community/tribe-specific teachers, especially female teachers in their respective regions as the lingual barrier between teachers, students, and parents can be mitigated and healthy interaction among them can be initiated. The engagement of female teachers in such regions would benefit to a great extent in addressing the girl's dropout rate. Teachers from the same community develop "we feeling" have a positive impact on parents in accepting suggestions and decisions regarding future

prospects of students. Moreover, teachers from other communities serving in different tribal regions must be provided necessary awareness about the concerned tribes, their language, culture, life style, etc. Furthermore, tribal language-specific training programmes for such teachers must be conducted.

Those tribal children who leave school on account of poverty, low SES of parents should be provided incentives, scholarships, and timely monetary assistance to meet their educational expenditures. Establishment of more special mobile schools for migratory transhumant tribes, mobility, specific infrastructure, employment of more teachers from the same community as well as their accountability will ensure their hereditary occupation will not impede them in school retention and dropout.

Child tracking mechanisms must be made mandatory in schools and annual dropout surveys must be conducted to locate dropouts, enquire the reasons of their dropout so that necessary measures can be taken before hand. Literacy campaigns, adult education programmes for parents and elderly

community members are the need of the hour, as only educated parents can realise the necessity of educating their children. Non-formal, vocational and technical education for children who could not attend school either due to special ability or labour will be of great help in engaging them in educational endeavours and preparing skill-oriented labour force.

The study suggests the establishment of numerous residential schools in tribe-specific locations managed and supervised by the concerned tribal communities. The school dropout issues need to be discussed with local communities and jirga councils and their opinions and suggestions to some extent will provide an insight and solution to the problem. The study suggested tribe specific micro-level research studies and surveys to get an understanding of their cultural & social setup, occupational patterns, life style, socio-economic status, attitude towards education of children, and other forces that impede the educational enrolment, retention and dropout of tribal children.

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